

**Remarks Greeting Crewmembers of the United States Navy Surveillance Aircraft Downed in China and an Exchange With Reporters**

*May 18, 2001*

**The President.** Welcome to the Oval Office. The Vice President and I are thrilled to be able to look you in the eye and say, thanks for your service to the country. I remember in my phone call saying, “Gosh, I hope I can welcome you to the Oval Office,” and here you are.

You handled yourselves with such class and dignity, it was important for our Nation to realize the fine caliber of people that serve our country. And we’re really proud of you. We appreciate your mission, but most of all, we appreciate your character. And so it’s my honor to welcome you here. I look forward to giving you a tour around this majestic office, a shrine to the greatness of America.

I want to say one other thing before we visit informally. Today the violence in the Middle East took on a new level of intensity. Our country is deeply concerned, first and foremost, for those who lost their life and for the families affected. It is essential that the leaders in the Middle East speak out clearly against violence.

We must break the cycle of violence in order to begin meaningful discussions about any kind of political settlement. My administration will continue to work with the parties involved, reminding folks that violence will not lead to peace, obviously. Violence will make it so difficult for there to be any political settlement.

I’m concerned any time anybody loses life. I’m especially concerned about suicide bombers that have disregard for themselves and, obviously, for innocent folks. We will continue to work hard to bring peace to that important part of the region.

Thank you all for coming.

**EP-3 Surveillance Aircraft in China**

**Q.** What is the latest on the spy plane?

**The President.** We’re working to get the plane home. We’re making progress about getting the plane home. But today we get to celebrate the fact that the crew is home. And that’s the most important thing.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:40 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

**Remarks at the Safe Harbor Water Power Corporation in Conestoga, Pennsylvania**

*May 18, 2001*

Thank you very much. Please be seated. Well, Governor, thank you very much. It’s an honor to be back in your beautiful State. I’m glad you told me you were overseas recently; I thought you might have been boycotting my last visit to your State—[laughter]—which was Monday. [Laughter]

Laura and I consider Tom and Michelle close, personal friends, as well as political allies. And I know the people of Pennsylvania consider him to be an excellent Governor, because he is one.

I want to thank you all for coming. And I also want to thank the hundreds of citizens that lined the road as we came in, to wave. It makes a fellow feel pretty good to see all the flags and the salutes. This is a wonderful place to come, not only because it speaks volumes about the policy that I’m going to address today, but it also reminds me of how wonderful our country is, how good and solid the people are that inhabit the great land called America. So if you see any of them that were on the road coming in, tell them the President says, thanks a lot for the hospitality.

I’m also honored to be traveling today with Members of the United States Congress. The United States Senator—I was going to say, the senior Senator, but I’m looking for some votes from him—[laughter]—but that’s Arlen Specter, who is doing a great job for the people of Pennsylvania; and the younger Senator, Senator Rick Santorum, as well; as well, a friend of mine from the great State of Alaska is with us, chairman of the Energy Committee, Frank Murkowski. I think old Frank must be looking for a cup of coffee somewhere. [Laughter]

We also have the Congressman from this area, Congressman Todd Platts. Where are you, Todd? There you go, thank you, buddy.